

O 030525Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0739
USDOC WASHDC 7181
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
CIA WASHINGTON DC//DDI/OEA//
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPA//
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
DIA WASHINGTON DC//DB-Z//

UNCLAS SEOUL 001337

DEPT FOR EAP/K, EAP/PD, INR/EAP/K AND INR/IL/P
TREASURY FOR OASIA/WINGLE
USDOC FOR 4430/IEP/OPB/EAP/WGOLICKE
STATE PASS USDA ELECTRONICALLY FOR FAS/ITP
STATE PASS DOL/ILAB SUDHA HALEY
STATE PASS USTR FOR IVES/WEISEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [KS](#) [US](#)
SUBJECT: PRESS BULLETIN - July 3, 2008

Opinions/Editorials

- [1](#)1. Time for the President to Eat U.S. Beef
(Chosun Ilbo, July 3, 2008, Page 27)
- [1](#)2. ROK-U.S. Summit; Breach of Diplomatic Protocol
(Hankook Ilbo, July 3, 2008, Page 35)
- [1](#)3. Repeated U.S. Diplomatic Discourtesy
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, July 3, 2008, Page 31)

Features

- [1](#)4. Bush to Visit Seoul on Aug. 5-6
(Chosun Ilbo, July 3, 2008, Page 5)
- [1](#)5. Frequent but Discordant Meetings Put ROK-U.S. Strategic Alliance
in Awkward Position
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, July 3, 2008, Page 9)

Top Headlines

Chosun Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun, All TVs
"Emergency Landing" of President Lee Myung-bak's Growth-Oriented
Economic Policy, Known as MBnomics, Only Four Months after President
Lee Took Office: Lee Administration Shifts Its Economic Policy
toward Stabilizing the Economy
from Boosting Growth

JoongAng Ilbo
Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the Nation's Militant Umbrella
Union, Goes Ahead with Illegal, Political Strike
to "Strangle the Economy"

Dong-a Ilbo
Seoul High Court: "If Online Postings are Feared to Defame a Certain
Person or Violate His or Her Privacy, the Postings
Can be Deleted without the Victim's Request"

Hankook Ilbo
"MBnomics" Lowers Economic Growth Outlook
to 4.7 Percent from 6 Percent

Hankyoreh Shinmun
MBnomics is in Crisis, But ROKG Only Offers Some Changes, Instead of
Conducting a Complete Surgical Overhaul

Segye Ilbo
ROK, U.S. Out of Sync... Lack of Communication?

Domestic Developments

- [1](#)1. According to a Blue House official, the U.S. has expressed regret
for unilaterally disclosing President Bush's plan to visit Seoul
from August 5-6, and the ROKG accepted the explanation on the

premise that such an incident will not be repeated. (All)

¶2. Chosun Ilbo's inside-page story wondered if President Bush's planned visit to Seoul will become a variable in the political situation in the ROK. Chosun noted a split in public opinion on the visit, citing some as arguing that the visit will provide an opportunity to enhance the bilateral alliance and others as saying that the visit will serve only to rally support for protesters against U.S. beef imports. (Chosun)

¶3. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service on July 2, some 241 tons of beef products from an approved U.S. exporter to the ROK have been recalled for fear that they might be contaminated with the O-157 strain of E. coli. An official from the ROK Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries was quoted as saying that no beef has been imported from the products in question since new beef import rules took effect. (All)

International News

¶1. The Chief U.S. Delegate to the Six-Party Talks, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, said in a July 1 speech organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington that the ultimate goal regarding North Korea's nuclear declaration is to obtain plutonium from North Korea and take it out of the country. (Hankook, Seoul)

¶2. "Movements in U.S. to Keep N. Korea on Terror List:" An increasing number of American political leaders oppose President Bush's plan to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. In the latest move, two House Representatives - Brad Sherman, chairman of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade Subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a ranking Republican on the Foreign Affairs Committee - submitted a bill to Congress to strengthen requirements for the North's removal from the list. (Chosun, Hankyoreh)

Media Analysis

¶N. Korea

Moderate Hankook Ilbo and Seoul Shinmun carried a quote from the Chief U.S. Delegate to the Six-Party Talks, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who said in a July 1 speech organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington: "The ultimate goal regarding North Korea's nuclear declaration is to obtain plutonium from North Korea and take it out of the country."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo and left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun ran inside-page reports on movements in the U.S. opposing President Bush's plan to remove North Korea from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. The two papers cited as an example the latest submission by two House Representatives - Brad Sherman, Chairman of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade Subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a ranking Republican on the Foreign Affairs Committee - of a bill to Congress to strengthen requirements for the North's removal from the list.

President Bush's Visit to Seoul

The White House's unilateral announcement on Tuesday that President Bush will visit Seoul on August 5-6 on his way to the Beijing Olympics and its subsequent expression of regret over the incident received wide attention. A Blue House official was widely quoted as saying: "The U.S. expressed regret over the unilateral announcement while both sides were still discussing when to make a public announcement on the visit, and the ROKG has decided to accept the explanation on the premise that such an incident will not be repeated." Most newspapers noted that it was the second time that the White House has unilaterally released information about President Bush's visit (On June 24, the White House also unilaterally announced that President Bush would not visit Seoul in early July), and called the incident a "breach of diplomatic protocol" and "diplomatic discourtesy." Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo's headline read: "ROK, U.S. Lose Diplomatic Contact," with conservative Dong-a Ilbo and Segye Ilbo saying, "ROK, U.S. Once

Again Out of Sync". Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized: "There are still some doubts that do not allow us to dismiss the incident as a simple mistake. It is hard to understand that the U.S. repeated a similar mistake in less than ten days. This is why some suspect that the incident might be a testimony to the U.S.'s displeasure with the dispute over U.S. beef imports in the ROK."

Meanwhile, conservative Chosun Ilbo's inside-page story wondered if President Bush's planned visit to Seoul will become a variable in the political situation in the ROK. Chosun noted a split in public opinion on the visit, citing some as arguing that the visit will provide an opportunity to enhance the bilateral alliance and others as saying that the visit will serve only to rally support for protesters against U.S. beef imports.

G8 Summit in Japan

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized: "The ROK is the 13th largest economy in the world in terms of GDP. Accordingly, it is unreasonable for the ROK to be excluded from the envisioned G13, with Mexico and South Africa, which fall behind the ROK, being included. The ROK's exclusion will inevitably lead to a fall in the country's international standing. The ROK should first endeavor to make the ROK included in the discussion to expand the current G8. If it is realistically impossible to remove one of the five new economies which are now under consideration for membership of the G13 and instead include the ROK, it is conceivable to expand the G8 to the G15, instead of the G13, to include the ROK, along with Australia, the world's 14th largest economy."

Opinions/Editorials

Time for the President to Eat U.S. Beef
(Chosun Ilbo, July 3, 2008, Page 27)

A Seoul butcher has been selling U.S. beef since Tuesday, from batches imported but held up last year when inspections were halted upon the detection of backbones. The shop sold out 200 kg of the American meat within a few hours, and five staffers were reported to have been busy taking telephone inquiries on Wednesday. Customers came by word of mouth. The shop intends to secure greater quantities of U.S. beef.

If one can be infected with mad cow disease by eating American beef, as claimed by the television and some Internet media outlets, those who bought the meat will risk their lives to eat it. Who would eat beef at the risk of their own life? No one. Because they know the allegation that U.S. beef equals mad cow disease is false, they buy beef with their own money and eat it with their families.

Ninety-six countries including European ones import and eat American beef with no restrictions imposed on the age of cattle. Our republic alone has undergone the mad cow disease uproar. If you want to say American beef is really dangerous, you should have evidence that even one U.S. cow has suffered BSE or that even one American has been infected with the human form of mad cow disease. Since the use of powdered meat and bone feed was banned in 1997, however, no U.S. cattle have been confirmed to have suffered BSE. Every year Americans eat nearly seven million cattle no younger than 30 months and eat soup made from beef bones like a staple. None of the 300 million Americans has been confirmed to have caught variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), the human form of mad cow disease, from eating U.S. beef.

The incompetent and irresponsible Lee Myung-bak administration is primarily responsible for the mad cow disease uproar, unprecedented in the world. The government, after taking no steps when unimaginable scare stories caused lots of repercussions, hid itself behind the riot police after the protests spun out of control.

Prime Minister Han Seung-soo revealed that he bought 12 kg of U.S. beef on Tuesday and ate it with his family, including his grandsons.

It's natural. But President Lee, not the premier, should have been the first to eat U.S. beef. The presidential family should be shown in public eating not only U.S. beef but also U.S. beef intestines and oxtail soup.

Not just once, but continuously, until the public is completely assured of its safety. The same is the case with Cabinet members.

Considering our livestock farmers, it's preposterous that the president and ministers have to eat U.S. beef, not Korean. It's unavoidable, however. It's a question staking the trust of the entire government.

For sure, people who don't want to eat American beef should be assured of not eating it. For group meals at schools, hospitals and barracks, opinion should be collected with priority given to those who hate to eat U.S. beef. And restaurants selling American beef disguised as Korean should be deprived of their business licenses after even one instance of deception.

* This is the translation provided by a newspaper organization and it is identical to the Korean version.

ROK-U.S. Summit; Breach of Diplomatic Protocol
(Hankook Ilbo, July 3, 2008, Page 35)

The U.S. yesterday unilaterally disclosed President Bush's plans to visit the ROK in early August to the press. On June 25, the U.S. also caused controversy by announcing the postponement of President Bush's visit to Seoul scheduled for early July without prior consultations with the ROKG. The fact that the unilateral disclosure by the U.S. happened twice in only ten days makes us feel a sense of shame that the U.S. looks down on the ROKG.

A key official at the Blue House said that the schedule was leaked by a U.S. official's simple mistake and that the ROKG does not view the disclosure as an act of diplomatic discourtesy. According to the official, the Director of Asian Affairs at the National Security Council disclosed the schedule of President Bush's visit to Seoul by mistake during a press briefing on a summit between President Bush and President Lee, which will be held on the sidelines of the G-8 conference in Japan next week. If that is true, it is acceptable

for the Blue House to say that it did not view the disclosure as the U.S.'s intentional breach of diplomatic protocol. The U.S. reportedly expressed regret through diplomatic channels and the Blue House accepted that.

However, there are still some doubts that do not allow us to dismiss the disclosure of the schedule as a simple mistake. When the U.S. unilaterally announced the postponement of President Bush's visit to Seoul last month, the announcement caused controversy and the ROKG expressed regret. It is hard to understand that the U.S. repeated a similar mistake in less than ten days. This is why some speculated that this incident might be the U.S.'s expression of its displeasure at the dispute over U.S. beef imports in the ROK. Recently, the Washington Post reported that the White House is no longer impressed by the Lee Myung-bak government.

The U.S. might not have made the mistake or the act of discourtesy intentionally as the White House and Blue House explained. However, the incident which goes against diplomatic custom cannot happen successively without the U.S. belittling the ROKG and the Korean people. The Lee Myung-bak government is responsible for that too. If it had tried to be closer to the U.S. with a sense of balance and by maintaining a proper level of tension with the U.S., the ROKG might not have been treated by the U.S. as of little account. We hope that anything that can undermine the ROK's national pride does not happen when a ROK-U.S. summit takes place in August.

Repeated U.S. Diplomatic Discourtesy
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, July 3, 2008, Page 31)

Yesterday, the White House unilaterally announced President George W. Bush's visit to the ROK early next month. A similarly unilateral move also came on June 24 when the U.S. announced that President Bush will not visit Seoul in July. These are a series of diplomatic discourtesies from Washington. When it comes to the summit schedule, it is customary for the two nations to make the official announcement at the same time or for the inviting nation to disclose the schedule first.

There must be some reason for this lack of courtesy being repeated

during the new ROK administration. First, the ROKG's lack of communication skills seems to serve as an obstacle not only at home but also in foreign relations. This view is bolstered by the fact that Seoul's relations with Beijing and Tokyo also have turned sour.

It is also possible to speculate that the U.S. may be intentionally showing a lack of courtesy due to its dissatisfaction with the beef controversy. Washington might think that since the Lee Myung-bak administration complicated President Bush's schedule, the U.S. will also respond in the same way.

The bigger problem is that the same thing can happen again unless the way the ROKG conducts diplomacy is changed. The ROKG has already had its diplomatic standing weakened severely by excessively pushing for a strategic alliance with the U.S., the effectiveness and adequacy of which have not been verified at all. It also goes against common sense that the government wastes its diplomatic resources on the Bush Administration which will leave office in several months. This is why this incident should serve as a chance to overhaul the ROK's foreign policy completely.

Features

Bush to Visit Seoul on Aug. 5-6
(Chosun Ilbo, July 3, 2008, Page 5)

By Reporter Joo Yong-joong

U.S. President George W. Bush will come to South Korea on Aug. 5-6, Cheong Wa Dae announced Wednesday, ending weeks of speculation about the date of the impending visit. "We hope that President Bush's upcoming visit will further deepen friendship and trust between the two leaders," presidential spokesman Lee Dong-kwan told reporters. "We also expect the summit to serve as an opportunity to reaffirm their will to develop with a view to the future the Korea-U.S. alliance, which has played a vital role in promoting peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia over the past 50-odd years."

The spokesman added Bush's visit comes at the invitation of President Lee Myung-bak during their Camp David summit in April. Lee and Bush are also expected to meet on the sidelines of the G8 conference in Japan next week, offering them a chance for two summits in a month.

The two countries had been considering a visit before or after the G8 summit but shelved the idea, reportedly because they worried a visit before street protests against the import of U.S. beef have subsided could worsen the protests and have an adverse effect on the two countries' relations. As speculation and denials flew back and forth, some worried that a warning light was flickering in the bilateral alliance, putting the two countries in an awkward position whether Bush came or not. Ignoring diplomatic protocol that requires two countries to consult on and announce summits simultaneously, the White House upset Korea twice by making a unilateral announcement to the press.

On June 24, the White House announced that Bush would not visit Seoul in early July. And on Tuesday, Dennis Wilder, the Asian Affairs Director at the White House's National Security Council, told reporters Bush would now drop in at Seoul on his way to the Beijing Olympics in August. The White House apologized and the two countries hurriedly made the official announcement.

Despite those hiccups, Lee and Bush have agreed to meet twice in one month because repairs to the Korea-U.S. alliance are urgent for the conservative governments of both countries. The question is whether Bush's visit will play into the hands of protesters who seem determined to maintain the atmosphere for demonstrations as long as possible, or allow the two countries to consolidate the alliance by overcoming the anti-U.S. beef sentiment in Korea.

That is only one hairy item on the agenda, on top of the troubles both leaders have to persuade their parliaments to ratify the Korea-U.S. free trade agreement.

Other tricky issues include how to share the upkeep of U.S. Forces Korea, pay for the environmental cleanup caused by the relocation of

U.S. military bases here, and act in concert in solving the North Korean nuclear issue by overcoming the North's maneuvering to bypass South Korea and deal directly with the U.S.

Meeting in April, Lee and Bush agreed to upgrade ties to a "strategic alliance" and put forth their vision for it at their next summit. The future of the ongoing protests here will depend on how substantially the two leaders can solve such issues at what looks like yet another critical juncture in the alliance.

* This is the translation provided by a newspaper organization and it is identical to the Korean version.

Frequent but Discordant Meetings Put ROK-U.S. Strategic Alliance in Awkward Position
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, July 3, 2008, Page 9)

By Reporter Lee Je-hoon

The ins and outs of President Bush's August visit

Due to diplomatic discourtesy, the general view that three summits in four months mean close bilateral ties does not apply to ROK-U.S. relations.

An ROKG official is doubtful that the two nations will adopt a future vision of their strategic alliance at the August summit.

Camp David, April 19 --> Toyako, Hokkaido, Japan, July 9 --> Seoul, August 5

This is the schedule of summits for President Lee Myung-bak and U.S. President George W. Bush. It is unprecedented for the leaders of both nations to meet three times in four months. From a diplomatic point of view, frequent meetings usually mean close bilateral relations.

However, recent discord over the ROK-U.S. summit defies this diplomatic interpretation. First of all, there were many protocol-related problems. The cancellation of President Bush's return visit to the ROK in July, which was agreed upon during the April summit, and his new plan to visit Seoul in August were disclosed to the press by the White House, which unilaterally made the announcements without prior consultations with the ROK. This is a "serious situation."

Furthermore, it is also doubtful whether the two leaders will have substantial discussions at the summit. In reference to President Bush's return visit in August, a high-ranking ROKG official said on July 2, "Thus far, we have not been well prepared (for the summit) due to the beef controversy. From now on, we have to speed up our preparations (for President Bush's return visit in August.)" This indicates that it is customary for diplomatic authorities to prepare the "outcome" of a summit through long consultations ahead of a summit, but this time, it has not been going smoothly.

In fact, President Bush's return visit in August was announced after the ROK-U.S. summit scheduled for July 10 in Seoul had been postponed, and it was scheduled on June 28 when Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan met with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. At that time, Seoul reportedly made a request to the U.S. that President Bush should visit the ROK when he heads to Northeast Asia to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics.

The July 9 summit between Presidents Lee and Bush in Toyako, Hokkaido, is an informal one on the sidelines of the G8 summit. Since that summit is not expected to last more than an hour, it will be difficult for the two leaders to have substantive discussions. During the summit meeting, they are expected to "strengthen their commitment" toward a strategic alliance and the ratification of the free trade agreement.

The focus of the ROK-U.S. summit in Seoul on August 5 is whether or not they can adopt a future vision of the ROK-U.S. Strategic Alliance for the 21st century. When the two nations agreed in principle to elevate ROK-U.S. relations into a "strategic alliance" at the April summit, they decided to announce the future vision for

the alliance during President Bush's return visit to Seoul. Blue House spokesman Lee Dong-kwan also said on July 2, "They will discuss ways to develop the ROK-U.S. alliance into a strategic alliance." However, a key government official retorted, "Given the current political situation, I am doubtful whether they will be able to adopt a future vision of the strategic alliance at the August summit." He indicated that although they will have discussions, it will be difficult to reach a "conclusion." In other words, considering the current situation facing the ROKG and recent developments in ROK-U.S. ties, bilateral relations are not stable enough to adopt a strategic long-term vision of the alliance.

Vershbow